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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002464

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SUBJECT: STATE MINISTER KHADIM PROMOTES SUNNI SHI'A UNITY,
CHALLENGES NGO COMMUNITY DESPITE MEAGER MONTHLY BUDGET

REF: BAGHDAD 2346

Classified By: Acting Political Counselor Henry S. Ensher.
Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[11.](#) (C) SUMMARY. State Minister Khadim for Civil Society told PolOff on June 7 that despite his ministry's meager budget, he intends to maintain a robust travel schedule and meet with NGO leaders both in Baghdad and the provinces. Khadim, a follower of Muqtada al Sadr, has met with Sunni and Shi'a tribal leaders in order to promote Sunni inclusion in the political process. Rounding out his ambitious work plan, Khadim intends to actively participate in the constitution development process from both within government and through polling from the NGO community. END SUMMARY.

[12.](#) (C) On June 7, State Minister for Civil Society Affairs Ala'a Habib Khadim briefed PolOff on the status of his ministry and its latest initiatives to promote Iraqi unity and social contributions of the NGO community. Khadim reviewed the following key areas:

-- NGO CONTRIBUTIONS IN THE NEW IRAQ: Khadim said that Iraqi NGOs need to focus their energies on positive contributions to the Iraqi people, suggesting that many NGOs are formed simply to win grants.

-- SUNNI AND SHI'A UNITY: Khadim said that on two occasions during the past two weeks, he met with Sunni and Shi'a tribal leaders to promote unity, Sunni inclusion in the political process, and to hear tribal grievances and concerns on behalf of the government. Principal grievances include high unemployment, unreasonable arrests, and the prevalence of water pollution. The tribes also wish to relieve the ISF and MNF-I from their duties, and have asked Khadim to allow them to assume responsibility to enforce violations of law that occur in their respective areas, such as Al Anbar, Ninewa, Diwaniyah, Kut, An Najaf, and Samarra, among others. Khadim stressed that the tribal leaders are in a better position to exert local control, and seek a larger role in reclaiming their communities from the insurgents. Khadim said he already presented a detailed plan to Prime Minister Ja'afari, and plans to see the PM as soon as possible to discuss possible courses of action. Khadim said the role, as tribal interlocutor is a natural for his state ministry.

-- SPECIFIC CUES FROM MUQTADA AL-SADR: Khadim provided details regarding his recent meeting with Muqtada al-Sadr, pointing out that Muqtada specifically said he would not interfere with the business of his state ministry. Khadim said that Muqtada provided him specific guidance on the conduct of his duties, telling him, "You are Iraq. The Iraqi people elected (sic) you." He said Muqtada advised him to "work hard and lift the burden of the Iraqi people", telling him work towards the "unification of the Iraqi people" through reconciliation between the Sunni and Shi'a. Muqtada also directed him to "ask the occupying forces" to leave Iraq. Khadim considers Muqtada's instructions as entirely consistent to the purpose of his ministry.

-- CONSTITUTION PARTICIPATION AT SEVERAL LEVELS: Khadim explained that his ministry has a very specific role in the constitution development process. First, he serves as a member of a "support committee" organized by the PM to assist the Constitution Committee. Second, he serves as a member of an inter-ministerial constitution committee under the Council of Ministers. Third, he intends to conduct "surveys" with the NGO community to coordinate civil society input directly to the Constitution Committee.

-- TALL ORDERS FOR MINIMALLY FUNDED MINISTRY: Khadim complained that he is still waiting for a response from the Secretary General of the Council of Ministers on his budget increase request, claiming that the

Secretary General's bloated 1,100 member staff (only

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200 are needed, he claimed) has created an impossible bureaucracy. Khadim said he submitted a budget plan that calls for the following: an NGO training center, several national unity conferences for Iraqi tribal leaders, conferences for NGOs, and publishing a monthly magazine. Khadim stated his staff has finally cleared an initial backlog of 1,000 NGO registration application packages, and he plans to sign the individual certificates by the end of the week. Khadim also claims that international donors contributed USD 145 million for three specific ministries: Women, Human Rights, and his ministry. However, he stated, he cannot find any records that indicate his ministry has received any of this funding. (Note: Post is researching the source and intent of these funds; there is nothing to indicate that any of these ministries received such funding. End note.)

-- REVISIONS TO CPA ORDER 45: Khadim said he has talked with NGOs regarding revisions to CPA Order 45 ("NGO Order") in order to address "ambiguous parts" of the order. While he does not believe a wholesale re-write is necessary, he does not discount that possibility. However, he stated he intends to keep the changes focused on the subject of NGOs without venturing into general discussions of non-profit organizations.

13. (C/NF) COMMENT. Khadim appears to be more proactive than his predecessor with respect to developing a strategy for active engagement with civil society and the NGO community (his predecessor could hardly explain a coherent strategy until the final days of his 8-month tenure). Current staff levels and the budget shortfall will prevent Khadim from carrying out his stated objectives. His focus on "shaping" the NGO community could mean attempts to assert government control over an NGO community whose mission includes democracy development and oversight of that same government. On a positive note, his civil society outreach may prove to be the best mission his ministry could perform. End comment.

14. (U) REO HILLAH, REO BASRAH, REO MOSUL, and REO KIRKUK, minimize considered.

Jeffrey